



THE BUNNY STORIES.

THE BUNNIES' GARDEN.

BY JOHN H. JEWETT.

PART I.

THE garden at Deacon Bunny's was a real garden.

It was not one of the "Keep off the grass" nor the "Do not handle" kind, where the walks and flower-beds are as prim and regular as a checkerboard; but a

garden to work in, to rest in, and to enjoy.

Gaffer Hare, who was called Deacon Bunny's farmer, was the head-gardener; but all the Bunnies were gardeners also, and they had one or more plats each, to keep in order, in which they planted what they liked best.

The only rule the Deacon made was that the Bunnies should take good care of what they called their own, and should see to it that the weeds did not rob the flowers of what rightfully belonged to them.

"Weeds will grow anywhere that flowers can grow," said the Deacon, "and all that is best and loveliest, and really worth having, needs constant care and work to make it thrive."

Of all the Bunnies, Pinkeyes loved flowers care of them best, and for this reason and was Gaffer's favorite.

He never tired of telling her of the of plants and shrubs and the best way

Gaffer did not know their botanical word of Latin, but he loved just what each needed to make be all the best flower or plant

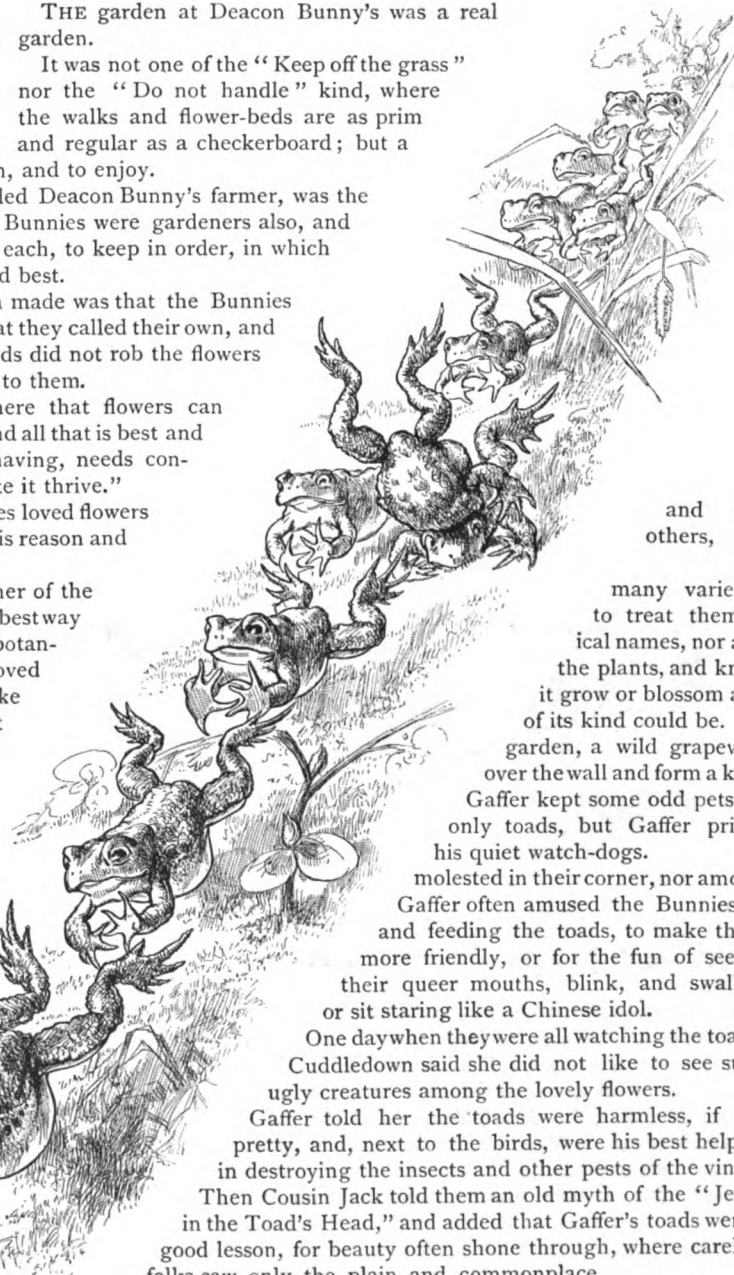
In one corner of their had been allowed to run of low bower, where

These pets were them, calling them

They were not the plants, and catching flies tamer and them open the flies,



GAFFER'S WATCH-DOGS.



and the others, she

many varieties to treat them.

ical names, nor any the plants, and knew it grow or blossom and of its kind could be.

garden, a wild grapevine over the wall and form a kind Gaffer kept some odd pets.

only toads, but Gaffer prized his quiet watch-dogs.

molested in their corner, nor among Gaffer often amused the Bunnies by and feeding the toads, to make them more friendly, or for the fun of seeing their queer mouths, blink, and swallow or sit staring like a Chinese idol.

One day when they were all watching the toads, Cuddledown said she did not like to see such ugly creatures among the lovely flowers.

Gaffer told her the toads were harmless, if not pretty, and, next to the birds, were his best helpers in destroying the insects and other pests of the vines.

Then Cousin Jack told them an old myth of the "Jewel in the Toad's Head," and added that Gaffer's toads were a good lesson, for beauty often shone through, where careless folks saw only the plain and commonplace.

Bunnyboy said he supposed it must be true, if Cousin Jack said so, but that he failed to see any beauty shining through a toad, and Cousin Jack replied that there were a great many kinds of beauty, and that outward show was not a proof of inward grace.

"The flowers," said Cousin Jack, "teach us one lesson of beauty, and perhaps the toads another, for it is something to be useful and harmless in a world like ours."

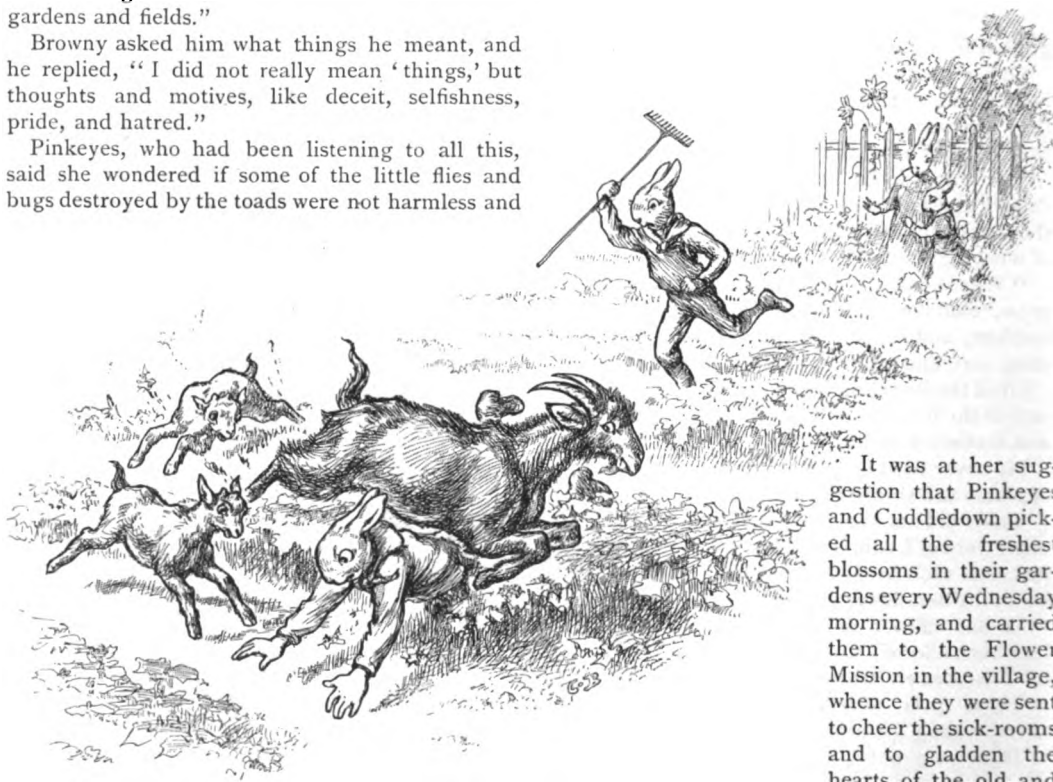
"The real ugly things," said he, "are oftener found living in houses than out in the beautiful gardens and fields."

Brownny asked him what things he meant, and he replied, "I did not really mean 'things,' but thoughts and motives, like deceit, selfishness, pride, and hatred."

Pinkeyes, who had been listening to all this, said she wondered if some of the little flies and bugs destroyed by the toads were not harmless and

Mother Bunny liked to work in the garden among the flowers as well as the others, but found little time for this kind of recreation, for she was always busy in doing or planning for the rest of the household.

She often used the time spent with them in the garden as "a moment to do a little mending for the children," which really meant stitching a lot of love and patience over all the worn and torn places in their clothing, that her four beloved little Bunnies might be fresh and tidy every day in the week.



BUNNYBOY AND BROWNNY TRY TO DRIVE THE GOATS OUT OF THE GARDEN.

useful, too, if only we knew the whole truth about them.

Gaffer coughed and looked at Cousin Jack, who seemed somewhat puzzled for a minute.

Presently he answered Pinkeyes by saying, "That is a good suggestion, my dear, and no doubt it is true, for the more we think about the wonders of the world we live in, the more we learn of their use and beauty."

Just then Mother Bunny came out with her sewing, to get a breath of the sweet summer air, and the Bunnies gave her the best seat in the shadiest nook, where she could watch them at their work.

It was at her suggestion that Pinkeyes and Cuddledown picked all the freshest blossoms in their gardens every Wednesday morning, and carried them to the Flower Mission in the village, whence they were sent to cheer the sick-rooms and to gladden the hearts of the old and feeble in both villages.

The Bunnies always enjoyed "Mission Morning," as they called it, and though they never knew just where the flowers were sent, they felt sure, at least, that they made life brighter for some one, somewhere, for a little while.

PART II.

STRANGE VISITORS IN THE GARDEN.

THE flowers occupied only a part of the inclosure the Bunnies called their garden.

Beyond the flower-beds was a large field where Gaffer raised many vegetables for the home table.

Bunnyboy and Brownie each had a share in this field, and enjoyed planting, weeding, hoeing, and harvesting their own crops of vegetables.

The Deacon told them a little real work was a good thing for boys, and gave them all the land they could use, and all they could raise on it, for their own, to sell or give away.

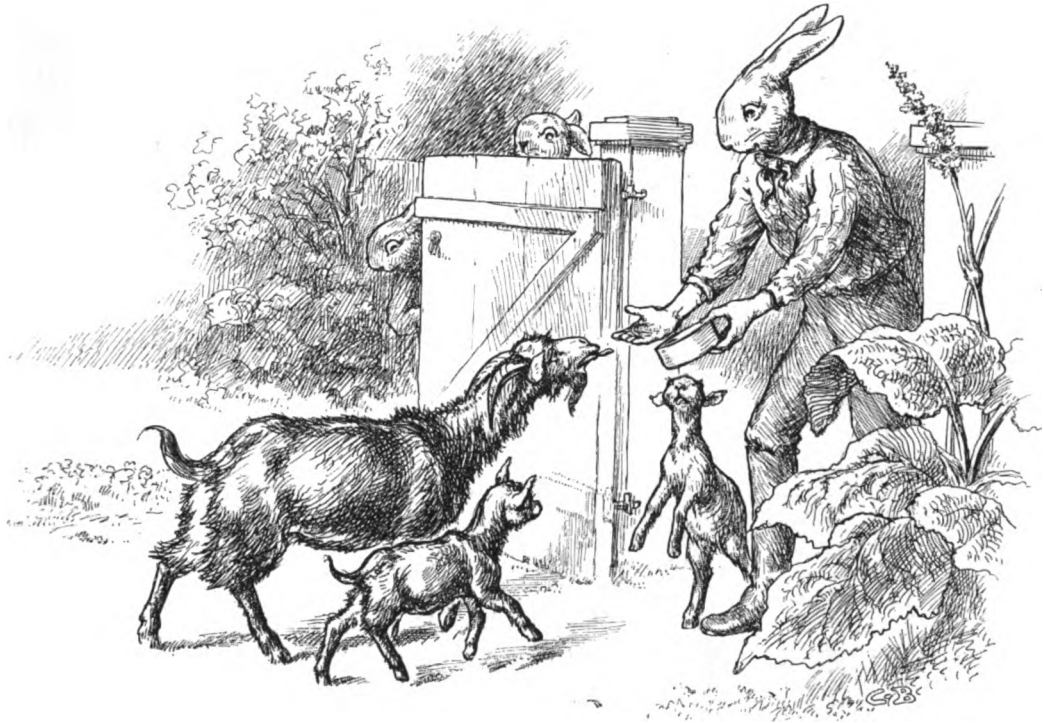
Sometimes they sold a few early vegetables, or berries, but oftener found some poor family to make glad with a basket of fresh things of the Bunnies' own raising.

Later in the season they always saved some of

They all came rushing into the garden, and then excitement began in earnest.

Each Bunny ran shouting after the goats, and the terrified kids dashed first one way, and then another, over the beds and vines, half wild with fright, while the anxious Mother Nanny ran helplessly bleating after them.

Round and round the garden they went, dashing in every direction but the right one, toward the gate, until nearly every bed had been trampled by their sharp hoofs, and the poor creatures were panting with fear and distress.



GAFFER COAXES THE GOATS THROUGH THE GATE.

each kind to send to the village Almoner as a Thanksgiving offering to the needy.

It was not a great deal to do, but the Bunnies enjoyed thinking that they had done something with their own hands to make Thanksgiving-day more truly a day of thanksgiving for somebody in the world.

One morning, a few days after the talk about the toads, Bunnyboy went to the garden early to begin his work.

He found the gate wide open, and on going in he saw a mother-goat and two kids nibbling his young pea-vines.

Running back to the house, he called the other Bunnies to come and help him drive out the goats.

Fortunately, Gaffer heard the din and racket and came to the rescue, before the garden was quite torn up.

Calling the Bunnies to the gate, he told them to be quiet and keep out of sight, and let him catch the goats in a quieter and quicker way.

Gaffer then took a wooden measure with some coarse salt in it, and shaking it gently, he called in a low voice: "Co-boss! Co-boss! Co-boss!" until the mother-goat came slowly up to him and, after a moment's hesitation, began to lick the salt from his hand.

The kids soon followed their mother to the gate, and, in less than half the time the Bunnies had taken in trying to drive them out, Gaffer had

coaxed them through the gate, and sent them trotting off to their pasture on the hill.

No one knew who had left the gate open, but suspicion fell on Brownie, as he was the last one to leave the garden the night before, and also because he was often heedless in little things.

Cousin Jack said the goat might have opened the gate herself, for about the only thing an able-bodied goat could not do in the way of sight-seeing, was to climb a tree.

Gaffer looked at the havoc made in the garden, and said it would take a week to undo the mischief they had done in five minutes.

Cousin Jack turned to Gaffer and slyly asked him whom he meant by "they,"—the goats or the Bunnies? and Gaffer replied, "Both!"

Then Cousin Jack said, "Well, well! the goats did not know any better, and the Bunnies did the best they knew then."

"Another time," said he, "I hope they will remember that the quietest way is usually the best way, and that bustle and noise and needless flourish are usually a waste of time and strength."

Gaffer said that he had always found that "Come," caught more goats than "Go," besides being an easier way.

Cousin Jack smiled and told the Bunnies that the sight of those trampled and torn flower-beds and the example that Gaffer had shown them was a better lesson than he could teach from the text of, "How not to do it," and that each one of them would do well to make a note of it in their diaries.

(To be continued.)

